

Tom Horne
Superintendent

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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Contact: Amy Rezzonico, Press Secretary (602) 542-5072

HORNE TO RELEASE FEDERALLY REQUIRED DATA FOR DISTRICT-LEVEL ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP)

PHOENIX (Friday, January 30, 2004) -- Tom Horne, Arizona Schools Chief, today will release federally required data for District-Level Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Horne emphasized that parents should focus on the state labels rather than the AYP labels. “We worked very hard to have a fair and accurate state system, and parents can tell how good their schools are by whether they received a label of underperforming, performing, highly performing, or excelling. In the AYP system, by contrast, a school could have outstanding test scores, and succeed in 143 out of 144 measures, but not make AYP because of falling short on only one measure. The state system, by contrast, is more comprehensive.”

Horne added that “regardless of which system one focuses on, the important thing is that the schools will be required to bring students to proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics. Currently, solutions teams, consisting of outstanding Arizona teachers and administrators, are helping Arizona’s underperforming schools to bring more students to proficiency.”

Horne stated, “While 24 percent of schools did not make AYP, 37 percent of districts did not make AYP. Some districts, whose schools did make AYP, ended up not receiving as high a classification as their schools. This is because if a school’s subgroups had less than the required minimum of 30 students, the subgroups was not evaluated, and therefore could not be a cause of a school failing. At the district level, very few districts had less than 30 students in each subgroup and the district suffered because they did not reap the benefit of the exclusion. In addition, if a student was at a school for less than a year, this school was not charged with responsibility for the student’s test score because it had no opportunity to teach the student. But at the district level, there would be students who moved from one school to another within the district, and so the district would be held responsible for that student.”

As an example, in one school district, the schools were labeled as follows: 13 excelling schools, 7 highly performing schools, 5 performing schools and no underperforming schools. However, the district did not make AYP. Horne stated, “This illustrates that parents need to focus on the state labels to determine how well their children’s schools are doing.”

District-Level Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations will be posted on www.ade.az.gov today at 5:00 p.m. Click on the AZ Learns section.

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